



## **WEEK ONE | BE MEEK & MERCIFUL**

This may not be your first rodeo facing the teachings of The Sermon on the Mount. Reading the Beatitudes may not hit you like a brick wall as it should. I mean, reading it as a description of a follower of Jesus sounds inspiring and challenging. However, reading it in light of Jesus saying, "This is what my true followers look like," makes it a very different thing doesn't it? You can almost hear people in the crowd saying, "Does he actually mean we should be meek and turn the other cheek? We'll be seen as weak and get creamed by our enemies."

**How is the whole call to be meek and turn the other cheek playing in our world today?**

**How do you typically react when confronted with ideas that challenge your beliefs or wants?**

## **TALK ABOUT IT**

**Read Matthew 5:3-10 (The Beatitudes).**

Now read the opposite AI version.

1. Blessed are the proud and self-sufficient, for they shall dominate the earth.
2. Blessed are those who celebrate their sin, for they shall never be burdened by repentance.
3. Blessed are the ruthless, for they shall seize whatever they desire.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for power, for they will be satisfied.
5. Blessed are the merciless, for they shall never be taken advantage of.
6. Blessed are those with hearts full of deceit, for they shall manipulate their way to success.
7. Blessed are the warmongers, for they shall impose their will upon the world.
8. Blessed are those who conform to the ways of the powerful, for they shall never suffer persecution.

**What does the contrast between The Beatitudes and their opposites teach us about the kingdom of God?**

**Describe your feelings hearing one verses the other.**

Russ said that it's hard to practice compassion without some level of empathy (experiencing what it's like in another's shoes). The more you understand where someone's pain is coming from the more you are likely to feel compassion for them and desire to help.

**How is Jesus entering and living in our world an act of empathy?**

## **APPLY IT**

**Read Romans 7:14–25.**

**Describe the battle you experience between knowing what to do and actually doing it.**

**How is “blessed” more than just happiness?**

**Describe the joy you feel when you are spiritually aligned with the Spirit of God.**

## **PRAY**

Make this time an indispensable part of your group. It can be at the beginning, end, or wherever but don't overlook it. We have plenty to pray about.

- Pray together before you go home.
- Take requests, email them to the group, ask them to pray this week.